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LETTER DATED 19 SEPTEMBER 1999 FROM THE CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF YUGOSLAVIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have been instructed by my Government to lodge a protest over the press conference given by Hashim Thaci at United Nations Headquarters on 17 September 1999, sponsored by the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Albania to the United Nations, the country which has rendered persistent support to Albanian secessionism in Kosovo and Metohija, the autonomous province of the Yugoslav constituent Republic of Serbia, and recognized the independence of the so-called Republic of Kosovo in October 1991.

Hashim Thaci is the leader of the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), the terrorist-separatist organization behind a ruthless campaign of terror which culminated in 1998, whose victims were police officers and hundreds of innocent civilians, Serbian and Albanian alike. The KLA was publicly branded a terrorist organization also by a high-ranking official of the State Department.

The terrorist activities of Hashim Thaci date as far back as the beginning of the 1990s. He was a member of the Albanian extremist organization "Popular Movement of Kosovo", the goal of which was the secession of Kosovo and Metohija and the creation of Greater Albania. Since 1991, he has been active in recruiting and training terrorists, and arming and infiltrating them into Yugoslavia, as well as in raising money for KLA activities, the origin of which is traceable also to illicit trade in narcotic drugs. He fled Yugoslavia in 1993 after taking part in a terrorist ambush of a Yugoslav police patrol at a railway crossing near Glogovac, in which four police officers were killed and three seriously wounded. On 11 July 1997, he was sentenced to 10 years in prison in absentia by the District Court of Pristina for the criminal act of terrorism, and a warrant has been issued for his arrest.

The deployment of the United Nations security and civil presences in Kosovo and Metohija has not, regrettably, put an end to the terrorist activities of the KLA. Following the withdrawal of the forces of the Army and Ministry of the Interior of Yugoslavia under Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and the Kumanovo Military-Technical Agreement, led by Hashim Thaci and abusing the security vacuum, the KLA engaged in systematic terror against Serbian and non-Albanian populations in Kosovo and Metohija with the aim of driving them out

of this Serbian province. Although in his public statements Hashim Thaci calls for the creation of a multi-ethnic society in Kosovo and Metohija and for peaceful coexistence among its ethnic communities, under his leadership the KLA has intensified a relentless campaign of ethnic cleansing of Serbs and other non-Albanians. Over 300 Serbs and Roma have been brutally murdered, more than 450 kidnapped and over 1,000 wounded, raped or otherwise maltreated, while according to UNHCR data, over 200,000 have fled the province. The "democratic credentials" of Hashim Thaci are best evinced by the testimonies of some Western diplomats, as well as some former KLA own members, to the effect that "the senior commanders of the Kosovo Liberation Army ... carried out assassinations, arrests and purges within their ranks ..." and that "the campaign ... was directed by Hashim Thaci ...", as quoted in The New York Times of 25 June 1999.

Bearing in mind the aforementioned, providing hospitality to the leader of a separatist-terrorist organization and a convicted terrorist himself is an unprecedented case of the degradation of the reputation of the world Organization as a symbol of peace, human rights and justice, and undermines the process of return of peace and security to this troubled province of the Yugoslav constituent Republic of Serbia.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vladislav JOVANOVIC
Chargé d'affaires a.i.